

HOLMAN DAY

The gifted author of "The Rider of the King-Log" here tells a blithe tale of movie madness—of a frenzied film-producer, of a lady unclothed and in her wrong mind, and of a bear, a bobcat, Mr. Trask and other wild, wild animals.

"Madam, I'm Adam"

Illustrated by Chase Emerson

MR. Henry Koshland destroyed the earth—toppled its cloud-capped towers and mashed flat the embellishments of civilization and the works of man. Made a clean job of it—bingo! Just like that!

Then, having destroyed the earth and the fullness thereof, Mr. Koshland, searching his mind for something bigger in the way of an idea, found himself up against it!

After he had sold out the Empyrean Sweets Company and had invested the proceeds in the Royal Arcade Theater, and had studied the films for three months, Mr. Koshland was thoroughly qualified to tell the world what was the matter with the movie industry. The main trouble was too much sweet stuff, averred Mr. Koshland, having been weaned from sweet stuff by the candy business.

"Torch 'em up with a title, and knock 'em down with a bam—and you've got 'em," summed up in one declaration Mr. Koshland's conclusions as an empiricist after his three months of exhibitor's experience; he had no use for theorists: he *knew*.

Therefore, Mr. Koshland went into producing on his own hook. And how he happened to think of something to produce was this:

The city went eminent-domaining it one day, extended the reservoir system, took in Diamond Lake and ordered off the shore the Ne Plus Ultra Recreation Park, a private enterprise. There was an auction sale of the buildings. Mr. Koshland went along to bid, as a silent partner, in behalf of his brother Pete, a building-wrecker who had himself just been wrecked by a building to the extent of a broken leg and a few fractured ribs.

After Mr. Henry Koshland sat into the auction game, thriftily jacking the bids by the offer of odd dollars, being a man who believed in the magic of odd numbers, there was born to him a specific idea out of the general notion that he was buying for wrecking purposes all those buildings that ranged from popcorn booths to the Castle of Splendor. Mr. Koshland had the inspired conviction that if the structures of the Ne Plus Ultra were going to be wrecked, the thing to do was to wreck 'em good and proper, and make the wrecking process pay its way.

So it happened that Mr. Koshland got control of enough of the world for his purposes, and annihilated it so utterly by fire and earthquake that all the folks who beheld the tumultuous doings, as caught by

the camera's eye, were agreeably willing to meet Mr. Koshland halfway and be convinced for the time being, till they were out on the street waiting for cars, that all the world was actually destroyed. The drama was produced under the title: "The Last Man."

"And a helluva good title, too," declared Mr. Koshland, who had been convinced by his Royal Arcade experience with posters that the title was half—if not three-quarters—the battle. He released for a lump price through ready takers, and settled with Pete after a session which wrecked the wrecking partnership. Pete bewailed this unorthodox system of wrecking; he considered that if the thing had been held up till he was around and about again on his game leg, he could have done a profitable job of salvaging while the hurry and scurry of demolition was going on.

Mr. Koshland expressed his contemptuous sentiments regarding the figure that Pete would have cut, sorting shingle-nails and piling scantling while the world was being destroyed. "It shows how far apart



The bobcat squalled. Mr. Trask leaped up, fell over the log, and was more frightened by what he beheld than he had been by the rock that whizzed past his ear.

we are on business notions, now that I'm a producer. Producers don't take expense into account! Not no more! You'll see how I'll produce!" Thus, Henry.

But after having tried for the space of a whole week to produce a solid precipitate, so to speak, from his boiling thoughts, considering the problem of a successor to "The Last Man," Mr. Koshland had not been able to secure anything for a "bam" that would top his first killer. There was a nebulous idea, to be sure, but he was not getting anywhere with it!

Capturing no full-fledged story, after such frantic mental galloping, he seemed to be wasting time. He assured himself that nothing could be the matter with his brains—he had always been quick as a flash in meeting the candy-market with novelties. Afterward, discussing the matter, he dwelt with astonishment on the fact that the idea of "The First Woman" to follow "The Last Man" had not come to him in the snap of a finger.

"But I'm all go-ahead in business," he declared. "I don't look behind. Progressive, that's me! I was thinking all the time what a fine picture it would be to make it a thousand years from now. I'm so lively on the jump up close with the times, that to hop ahead one or two thousand years—it's nothing. But the darned fools say they don't know how to write it out for me, what it will be so far ahead. I'm progressive enough so that I know. I'll write it myself when I have time."

Any fair-minded person would have agreed with Mr. Koshland that there was no time for that writing after the second "helluva good title" came along. He knew it for what it was worth, the moment it rang in his ears.

He had been calling Lew Keyes names because Lew seemed to be irritatingly uncertain in regard to what sort of scenario would hit off conditions a thousand years hence. Mr. Koshland insisted that contemporary affairs had been done to death; for the last three weeks of his ownership of the Royal Arcade, the only way he had been able to hold his attention in leash as a critic, in order to see a picture through, was to plant himself in the middle of a row, flanked right and left by matrons with laps heaped high with

hats and purchases. By reflecting that women would advise their friends to stay away from a theater where the proprietor was such a boor that he walked on patrons' feet, right in the middle of a picture, he managed to stick in his place.

"And your best idea of what is going to happen a thousand years ahead, it aint so good as what's happening on the screen now, bad as it is," he declared to Lew. "I have hired you off that newspaper. Keyes, in the hopes that you could keep it up right along, writing about things that have never happened. What you quit so soon for, now that you work for me?"

"It takes time to think up a big thing."

"But I thought how to destroy the world when I was between bids at Ne Plus Ultra. Quick, like that!" He clacked his finger into his palm. "Next I think quick to make a picture a thousand years from now."

"I reckon it's *ne plus ultra* on that dope, so far as I'm concerned. I'll resign, if you say so."

But Mr. Koshland, who was of an inquiring turn of mind, had his interest piqued by Keyes' qualifying reference to the dope.

"Is it something besides a park name, the Ne Plus Ultra?"

"It means nothing ahead—nothing more to come, as you might say!"

Mr. Koshland wiped his forehead. "I hope I haven't bought a hoodoo name along with that park," he fretted. "It's a whole week that I've been thinking, and I haven't even got a title. And that's half the battle, as I have always said, because the story writes itself after we have the title. And you have always wrote about the things that never happened, and now you can't write. If it aint a hoodoo, then why can't you?"

Mr. Keyes had a certain sort of satiric humor in him, even if

he did not have inspiration always on tap. "I might say with Napoleon, answering the question about ability, 'Able was I ere I saw Elba.'"

"You don't mean that I hurt your eyesight so much that you can't get your mind onto your work, hey?" demanded Mr. Koshland with considerable truculence.

"Oh, it's nothing personal. I only quoted that for fun—because it's a palindrome."

"It's what?"

"Pal-in-drome."

"Then what is a pal-in-drome?" Mr. Koshland's inquiring propensity was right up on its hind legs.

"Write down what I said."

The employer was at his desk, and he wrote slowly and carefully while his press-agent dictated.

"Spell it backward. It reads the same."

Mr. Koshland painstakingly convinced himself of the truth of that peculiarity.

"There are plenty of 'em," writer Keyes informed him. "There's 'Yreka Bakery' and—"

Mr. Koshland, taking nothing for granted in this new activity as a philologist, wrote down those words too.

"But the best one of all, to my mind, is 'Madam, I'm Adam,'"

pursued the press-agent indifferently. Keyes was jumped out of that indifference by the prompt and galvanic manner in which Mr. Koshland displayed his emotions. The latter lifted his voice into a shrill, "What?" Then he leaped up and stood in his chair, in order, evidently, to lift his voice to the height which the occasion demanded. "What? Say it so I don't think I'm dreaming it."

Mr. Keyes repeated.

"And you had that in your head all the week while I've been putting my brains on night and day shifts, and you don't tell me? Were you holding out on me? What for? Do you intend to produce for yourself? It's it!"

"What's it?" demanded Mr. Keyes, much mystified.

Mr. Koshland's next phase of emotion—repressed, inforced

calm, calm secured by the throttling method—was more impressive than his outspoken violence. He was ominously satiric when he slid down and sat in the chair and explained meticulously to Mr. Keyes that what "it" was was a little dog playing marbles with the goldfish in the beef stew and having such a good time; it was a lovely grapefruit all so nicely served with drawn butter; it was—

But Mr. Koshland banged his fist and got back to business and called Mr. Keyes some more names and informed him that what "it" was was a *title*—and that if it were not for him, Mr. Koshland, there would never be any producing done by the firm; but that it was hard lines when he was obliged to do mental pocketpicking in order to get an idea out of an employee. "But it's why I'm in the game—why I belong in the game. I see where others don't see!" He rapped his knuckles on top of his head, in the middle of the bald spot, and averred that he harbored a thousand of 'em in there. Whatever they might be, he did not say; nor did Mr. Keyes say that he wanted to say, that they'd better stay there because they couldn't pick up much of a living in the aridity on the outside of Mr. Koshland's head.

"One, or two thousand years ahead—the idea—it's easy for me! Two or three thousand years backward for a jump—it's just as easy. Talk about your pal-in-drome—aint I one?"

"Yes," agreed Mr. Keyes, getting a little comfort by viewing the word as an epithet.

"Madam, I'm Adam!" You see now, eh? Now that I'm so quick to show you!"

"Sure! It's the First Woman, following the Last Man."

"You're waking up. It's slow. But I have hopes. You're mumbling in your sleep."

"Well, what else would it be but an Eve story?"

Mr. Koshland tossed up his arms in a gesture of despair. "Gone to sleep again!"

"But it's got to be an Eve story!"

"Because she's another pal-in-drome—her name is—you think she has got to be signed on for that, eh? Don't you think nothing about anybody else but Eve, and she has been done to death? And where's the second-wife interest to come in unless there's children by the first wife to wean away the husband and get it so that the sacrifice is made? Or unless the second wife has a past to be shown up? And Eve had no past. She didn't even grow up. Keyes, don't you know the facts about your own relations, way back? Is it that a reporter on a newspaper don't have to know anything about facts?"

Mr. Keyes had opened his eyes in frank amazement. He had been giving Mr. Koshland grudging credit for knowing how to make candy and money, and the money was giving Mr. Keyes twice the pay he had been getting on a newspaper. But Mr. Koshland as a historian—well, Mr. Keyes would have laughed in his sleeves if his sleeves had not been rolled to his shoulders so that he could enjoy the summer salubriousness and get at his typewriter more conveniently.

"I ask you a plain question, easy answered," pursued Mr. Koshland with heat, not liking Mr. Keyes' expression, "and you look at me like I don't know all about Adam's first wife, and the trouble there was in the family before he was married to Eve."

"You're raving!" adventured the press-agent, unable to endure any more onslaughts on his journalistic omniscience.

MR. KOSHLAND set his fat hands on the arms of his chair and leaned low and far forward, and his posture and his bulging eyes made him look like a particularly indignant frog. "And you don't know about Lillie?"

Mr. Keyes said he didn't, and said so with derogatory emphasis.

"Perhaps in the next job you get after you have lost this one, which is lost already, you can make good if you tell 'em there is one thing you know. It's a thing I'll tell you!"

But Mr. Koshland sat back in his chair and sighed and shook his head, like a man who had started to climb a mountain and had given up the project in despair. Tackling this monumental ignorance was too much of a job! "No, you'd better not know it. As it is you win a prize for being what you are. But, yes, I will tell you so that you can see that a man like me has knowledge to give away and makes no account of it, while a man like you wants to sell something he don't have; it's a fine living you can go and make on the curb, if you aint called in a hurry to cover after selling short!"

He put up a pudgy forefinger: "Lillie, she was Adam's first wife. I say nothing against her. But there was trouble. I leave that as it is. What I know privately I keep to myself," declared Mr. Koshland, blending his generosity in giving away information,

free of charge, with the generosity of friendly tact in handling a touchy matter. "But what's on the records, it's all right to speak about. After Adam got married the second time, Lillie, she used to come round in the night and scare the children.

"But this jabber to you gets me nothing," pursued the boss, plunging back to business with a snap. "It's for me to go ahead! I have to do it myself. 'Madam, I'm Adam!' It writes itself for him and Lillie! He slaps his chest and brags about himself, and the trouble starts! You see it?"

"It ought to be great stuff," agreed Mr. Keyes.

Mr. Koshland's eyes glistened. "You give me credit, eh?"

"I'll have to, boss. And I reckon I can see the drift, now that you have passed me the hunch. I've been playing the thing all along on the idea that there was only one woman. But if there was another besides Eve, then it's natural to assume there were still others, and—"

Mr. Koshland put up his open hand and sliced the air, remorselessly cutting off the suggestions that he saw on the way.

"Nix! I make clean pictures. That's me! There are too many scandals already on the releases without you and me going back into a scandal in our own family. She is a new woman, that first one. She starts to run Adam and the world. It's Thorna Poole for the part—sure it is!"

THE press-agent, in an agreeing mood, indorsed the suggestion. Miss Poole, at the climax of the world's destruction, in the sacrificial spirit of true womanhood, had lugged the overwhelmed Last Man on her shoulders for three hundred feet (of film) and had supported him on upstretched and sinewy arms for two hundred more film feet while smoke and flame and serpents wreathed around those arms; Miss Poole was perfectly wonted to snakes, having juggled certain lissome and lethargic pythons in a Ne Plus Ultra sideshow, besides shimmying with a dancing bear.

"She has the snakes still. There's her bear, old Nicodemus, that she will meet in the cave. She lives in the cave, and the rent is raised, or something, and she has to go and live in a new cave and has to evict the bear that lives there; and I guess the women, when they see that, will say that flat-hunting, tough as it is in these days, aint having to put out snakes and a bear before the phonograph and the rubber-plant can be lugged in—and that's why the picture will make 'em contented and forget some of their troubles—and that's half the battle in putting over a picture good and strong. And the title—we have it!" rattled on Mr. Koshland breathlessly. "And you see I have the picture writing itself so fast I can't keep up!"

He put his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat and surveyed Mr. Keyes with complacent superiority.

The boss had been a hard man to live with during the week that had been devoted to the thousand-years-ahead scenario. In this new and triumphant mood his personality was decidedly more engaging. Mr. Keyes had been quite willing to quit, considering what he had been going through in order to earn his salary. Now, Mr. Keyes, viewing the new good humor, was willing to hang on. And in the way of hanging on, he set his mental teeth into the thing, so to speak. Lively and energetic thinking in a crisis does bring results, if one is sufficiently desperate!

"By jiminy, boss, I see, and I'm cantering along with you neck and neck on the press stuff. But hold on!" He assumed an expression that was properly contrite and doleful. "I'm fired! You don't want it from me!"

"I gave you facts you didn't know—free, glad," declared Mr. Koshland. "And now when you can give me something, and you haven't given me nothing for a week, you dry up."

"I'll meet you halfway. Knowledge for knowledge!" Keyes assured him. "Then we'll part square, at any rate. Here's the dope! Don't you remember that fellow who went into the woods a few years ago—went in without clothes or tools or weapons—went in and made his way barehanded and fed himself, and all that, and come out clothed in skins? Sure, you remember him!"

Koshland shook his head. "I was in the candy business then," he said.

"Well, he went in, and the papers were full of the story. A killer for press-stuff. Now do you see?"

"You're telling me, now. Go ahead!" But Mr. Koshland was exhibiting lively interest.

"For press-stuff—before we start work on the picture—send in a woman to do the same trick! Cave-stuff! Like that woman probably had to do for herself before she hitched in with Adam. No hint at first that our dame is tied up in any way with a moving-picture proposition! Can't you see the headlines, boss?"

"Yes!" admitted Mr. Koshland; he added avidly: "Free!"



Full of raspberries and fraternal feeling, Nicodemus apologetically shuffled in at the door. Mr. Trask was frightened and cursed horribly.

"Sure, all free! They'll eat it up!"

"But what will the *woman* eat? For the screen play she does the cave-stuff in the studio, of course. But for the press-stuff it must be outdoors."

"Hish!" Mr. Keyes put his hand to the side of his mouth. "Fake it! Plant clothes, grub and gun and knife. It'll be easy. I know the right kind of a place. When I was a boy I lived up that way. It's named Misery Gore. It's all rocks and gorges and streams and woods. Nobody lives there. There's only two or three ways of getting into the place by passes through the rocks, unless you climb mountains; we can let her loose and keep out the rubbernecks. Do you need to have *cinch* spelled out any plainer than that?"

Mr. Koshland tried to hold himself down to a judicial air of reserve, wishing to keep Mr. Keyes in the strictly clipped-wing state. "I'll say this much; it's feasible!" he agreed. "Of course, it aint a new idea, seeing that the man has done it."

"But this is a *woman*—the interest will be twice as big."

"I'll admit that it may be a little more than feasible, seeing that it's a woman. You take my car and go bring Thorna Poole."

ON the way to fetch Miss Poole, Mr. Keyes stopped at the public library, desiring to post up on a lady to whom he referred familiarly as "Lillie" when he made inquiries of a considerably shocked attendant, who proceeded tartly to set him right. He discovered that Mr. Koshland had not been far out of the way in dealing with the high spots in Lillith's career. "But when it comes to putting the trimmings onto this thing," he assured himself, "I'll be the main lad on the top of the stepladder with my mouth full of tacks!"

When the "trimmings" had been hitched on, Mr. Koshland admitted that Mr. Keyes did have capabilities of his own. "But the big idea being mine, it's like I have the brains to own the store and hire you to dress the windows. It's nice pieces they have in the papers about her this morning."

Miss Poole's declaration of what she proposed to do to show a woman's up-to-date nature in this era of feminine assertiveness won plenty of space in the news-prints. Mr. Keyes fixed up the public declaration for the lady, who said privately that she would stand for anything provided it could be made certain that nobody could see her wearing clothes, after she had hopped off into the wilderness without garments. "And that aint as funny as it sounds, being unlike what most any lady would say," she stated. "But the duds and the eats must be planted for me, for I've got my health and my looks to take care of, now that I'm in the fillums. On the other hand, my professional reputation aint ever been smirched by a fake, and that reputation is twice as important now. But I know my limitations—and it's hard enough these days to get grub and clothes with cash, to say nothing of going after 'em with a stone hatchet."

The big idea on which Mr. Keyes hung all his trimmings was this: Miss Poole would drop from the apex of today right down through all the thousands of years and land on the bedrock of the primitive, and when Mr. Keyes said "*drop*," he meant just what he said.

MISS Poole arrived in the neighborhood of Misery Gore in a flying-machine, and the pilot maneuvered skillfully, and she dropped with a parachute into a small clearing, carefully located in advance, and where the cameras and newspaper men were waiting. She was garbed as an aviatrix and came down spick-and-span and smiling, and was caught in her progress and in her poses by stills and the cinema.

Mr. Koshland was the first to shake her hand when the billowing folds of the parachute had been pulled away from her. He slipped to her a folded paper that he had been palming. "As a friend and a well-wisher, I give you a hearty welcome," he declaimed; then he bent down to pull away a guy-cord and whispered: "It's all on the paper—map and marks where we planted the stuff. We did it last night. You needn't worry."

Under pretense of adjusting the hair beneath her cap, Miss Poole tucked the paper into her coiffure.

"As a friend and a well-wisher for this lady," stated Mr. Koshland, for the benefit of the lads with pads and pencils, and having already aired his knowledge of history, "I'll say that she is on the square to do as Lillie done, and she starts as Lillie herself was—only there aint any figleaves growing around here."

The bystanders exhibited plenty of interest.

"But as a friend I have picked these burdock leaves and fastened 'em together so she can be as Lillie was in the summer weather. And she will kill savage beasts and make herself skin

clothes to show that she could live here in cold weather, too, if she didn't have to go home away from here pretty quick to—to—"

It was such a beautiful opportunity to slip in a word about Miss Poole's pressing professional engagement, to follow her essay at stone-ageing it, that Impresario Koshland almost choked when he shut off his speech and walked to Miss Poole with the primitive garment. He found his chance to whisper: "You'll see on the map where we have hitched Nicodemus in a raspberry patch. He's having such a good time eating berries that when you hit him in the back of the head he wont notice it, only to die happy."

Mr. Koshland felt that he could not afford to have the attendant publicists too greatly offended by Miss Poole's modest avoidance of the ultra-realistic in the career of Lillith. Therefore he appointed a committee to get busy and receive the lady's garments as they should be flung over the canvas, screen behind which she retreated; he assured the gentlemen of the camera that they would be allowed to shoot at will when the lady came forth in her burdock attire.

"Miss Poole will also do an interpretative dance," explained Mr. Keyes, steadfastly intent on the trimmings of the affair. "Lilith about to plunge into the darkest ages! Lillith facing the dangers of the wilderness!"

In view of that promise, the newspaper men became expectantly and entirely absorbed in the affairs in the clearing that was just outside the fastnesses of the wilderness of Misery Gore.

RIGHT in the middle of the fastnesses, down in the bottom of the deepest gorge, Mr. Ravelo Trask was absorbed on his own hook. He was contending with a mystery that had split his placid life wide open and was causing him to marvel wildly what the blue blazes was happening in the world—and for him, as a recluse trapper for fifty years in that region, the world was bounded by the mountains of the Gore.

Anybody looking down into the gorge would have beheld a slouchy and mangy black bear sitting on a log, smoking a corncob pipe and surveying with grunts and moans of amazement and trepidation a heterogeneous collection of objects heaped on the ground.

The bear was Mr. Trask.

As a trapper, tamer and breeder of mink, fisher and their like, he had evolved an unique system of his own in making himself as much a part of the life of the region as possible; on his rounds he wore a bearskin and plodded on all fours a good part of the time, accompanied by two domesticated minks and a bobcat. He found that he was accepted by the general run of fur-bearing animals as a compatriot, rather than a death-dealing human being. An undisguised man would have precipitated an exodus of his means of livelihood; in his furry domino Mr. Trask was complacently tolerated by all, and his native companions served as decoys. He even masked his habitation, dwelling in a cozy little nook that resembled a boulder covered with brook mosses.

Mr. Trask, having made a business of following trails and detecting signs, knew the status quo of his own locality as an art-collector knows his canvases.

Mr. Koshland was more or less of an Indian in business, but he was far from having an Indian's traits in woodcraft, and his tracks and his clumsily marked hiding-places were open to an expert's view—as plain as a connoisseur of paintings would find vandal scratches across his choicest works. Therefore Mr. Trask, beginning his placid rounds of the day, had been successively interested, alarmed and stupefied by discoveries, and at last sat on the log and dragged on his pipe and made funny noises in his throat. He had ferreted faithfully and had collected from their hiding-places every rag and stitch of the cached clothing—a woman's clothing—tins of queerly named food, a gun, ammunition, a keen hunting-knife and any amount of assorted truck, including scented soap, tooth-paste, and other toilet appurtenances.

Considering the amazing collection that he had heaped in front of him in the bottom of the gorge and surveyed in a state of mind only one removed from panic, Mr. Trask gave merely languid side-glances at an airplane when it came whirring and whizzing into view over the distant tree-tops. He had never seen a flying-machine; he had never heard anything sensible regarding one, and would not have believed in any such thing, even if somebody had told him about it; his settled principle was—having been hoaxed in times past when he had gone to the nearest town to sell off his skins—never to believe in anything that was told to him about what was going on in the world at large.

"That thing, whatever it is, is simply and predickly more of it, and the same," he informed the goggling bobcat. "Only it don't come up to this here stuff for taking up my attention and interest

and making me wonder what's going to bust out next in this world."

He saw the parachute drop in its first terrifying thrust through the air, open its top and float downward. The bobcat got behind the log and squalled. "Yes, interesting enough prob'ly, perviding I had time to give it attention and thought," stated Mr. Trask, turning his back on the spectacle and poking at the collection in front of him with the claws of his adoptive hind foot. "But this here is more ponifferous to me right at the present time. All I've got to say is this: that if they're distributing women and their fixings around in these parts, they haven't got the system ringdinkled up right; it's too hit-or-miss and scattering."

He gathered up all the stuff in his arms and went waddling down the gulch and disappeared in the mossy wart that served him for a home. "This here aint no kind of a shower that I want to be caught out in. I reckon I'll stay under kiver till it's over," he informed Nature, in general, as he stepped into sanctuary.

MISS Poole tripped about her prehistoric job after she had terpsichoreally interpreted Lilith's emotions, clad in her garb of leaves and holding a threatening rock in each hand. Everybody present assured her that her costume was very fetching.

"I'll tell you what, boss," said she to Mr. Koshland, passing a word in private before the plunge into the wilderness, "I aint going to snuff out old Nicodemus. What's the use? Let him enjoy life! The leaves is enough for togs—and they're all saying a good word for 'em."

"But unless you kill the savage beast and wear the skin when you show up to the world, the story aint no good," objected the employer. "And he aint no use, anyway. His teeth is gone, and he'll die pretty quick, so we aint destroying money."

"He has been my pet, and it would give me the wallopies to wear his skin. I wont kill him."

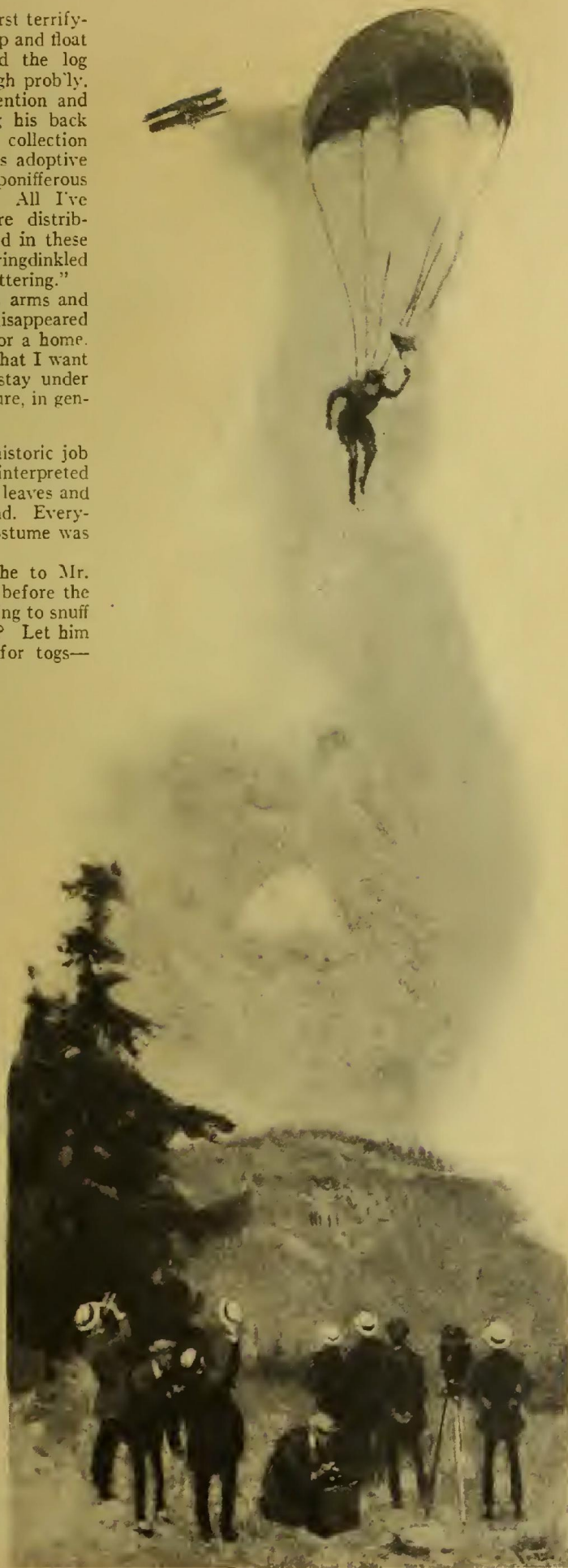
"But you've got to be the wild woman, and you're supposed to cat him, too. It makes the story," pleaded Mr. Koshland.

"I wont do it," insisted the lady. "I'm feeling wild enough to have my own way."

Miss Poole was still having her own way when black night filled all the crannies and gulches of Misery Gore with the opaque completeness of coal-tar in a bucket. She continued to be wild, too! She was much wilder than she had ever expected to be. And that way she was still having—the way of her own—had become a much muddled proposition as to routes and direction, because she had succumbed to an ecstasy of rage and had torn up her chart and stamped on the tatters.

What kind of a chart it was, according to her belief, was thoroughly understood by all the abashed little birds within hearing distance. In her strictly stone-age mood she had flung words at that chart as she would have heaved rocks at a viper. Instead of finding clothes and food and weapons, she had been finding only fresh incentives to invent further expletives to

Miss Poole arrived in the neighborhood of Misery Gore in a flying-machine and dropped with a parachute into a small clearing



use in her summary of the general mental, moral and business qualifications of Mr. Henry Koshland. She decided that she was at that moment a prehistoric woman all right enough, in point of equipment, even if she had not really intended to go the limit in the matter. To say nothing of not being able to find a stitch of clothing or a morsel of food, she was not sure of even finding the solid earth in the stifling blackness. The earth, in that rugged country, had a queer way of dropping out from underfoot whenever she tried to walk.

A hearty and unexpected thunder-shower had banged a sunset salute and mixed pellets of hail in its down-pour; the rain kept up during the evening! It was a hard night for a lady in a burdock-leaf costume. Furthermore, in the panic that always overtakes neophytes who are conscious of being lost in the wilderness, she had ripped through undergrowth without reflecting that burdock leaves will not stand really rough wear. Miss Poole came to have strong personal convictions in regard to a man who would turn her loose in the wilderness with a slip of paper for aid and a lettuce salad for garb.

She raised her voice and clamored in the night for Nicodemus.

Her intentions in regard to him were not well defined just then. She knew that she was wild enough to alter her opinions of him as a pet and to slay him for the pelt he wore, even if she were obliged to skin him with her teeth and a sharp rock. On the other hand, she would have been grateful for his companionship and knew that he would meekly serve as a foot-warmer if she could find him and snuggle up beside him. She reckoned that Nicodemus must be frightened and lonesome too. He was of the city as much as she.

She guessed right in regard to Nicodemus. He truly was frightened and lonesome when the tempest
(Continued on page 134)



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Dr. Edwards'
OLIVE
Tablets

"MADAM, I'M ADAM"

(Continued from page 55)

thundered and the rain fell and the blackness of night descended on the forest. He was not of the forest, not he! He craved the companionship of humans. But he did not come to the call of Miss Poole. He had long before attended to his own case and had pulled up his stake and had instinctively sought out Mr. Trask—thereby topping out Mr. Trask's monopoly of the full collection of the props of the Koshland Photoplay Company.

FULL of raspberries and fraternal feeling, Nicodemus apologetically slouched in at the open door of Mr. Trask's retreat and stood erect and wistfully made the obeisance that Miss Poole had impressed upon him as being good manners.

Mr. Trask, on account of the inclemency of the evening and entertaining in the back of his head an apprehension that, in those troublous times and in that season of mysteries, he might be compelled to make a quick get-away, was arrayed in his bearskin. But his natural instincts as a makeshift bear did not extend to any depth below the skin. When Nicodemus dropped upon all fours and amicably sidled toward the host, Mr. Trask was dreadfully frightened and stood up and cursed horribly by reason of that fright.

"I aint no bear," he informed the caller.

Nicodemus did not require any vocal assurances on that point. He would have run away from a real wild bear with just as much speed as Mr. Trask could have shown in flight if inspired by menace of the sort.

Nicodemus was filled with thankful joy in finding one of the agreeable specimens of humankind with whom he had always been associated, and the garb this person wore was, at first glimpse, merely reassuring evidence that he liked bears. When Mr. Trask picked up a three-legged stool and showed hostility, Nicodemus bowed again.

Mr. Trask considered that he knew a whole lot about wild animals, and he found this amazing politeness absolutely baleful. It presaged something wholly outside his reckoning. Since his return from his foraging, he had been meditating further, sorting over his loot, and had decided that the world was tipped upside down and was being "sluiced to sancho, hell-bent by the slippery-ellum route." Now it looked to him as if the bears were on the way too. This particular bear further astounded Mr. Trask by shuffling a bit of a jig and by sticking out an appealing paw for a handshake after the jig was finished.

Then Mr. Trask astounded the bear; the host banged the polite caller on the head with the three-legged stool, drove his foot against Nicodemus with a thrust that sent him slumping into a corner and fled out into the night with a hoarse squawk of terror.

As much as he admired human beings, Nicodemus, after his years of meek submission to training, was also accustomed to the churlish vagaries of human tem-

perament. He whined his regret at this misunderstanding for a few minutes after Mr. Trask's departure, then went to sleep behind the stove.

Mr. Trask, after he had roamed in the night for a little while, began to assure himself that he was not afraid of a bear as a bear, having been for fifty years a hunter. Therefore he tiptoed back to see what could be done in the matter. He did not marvel because he had run away before intrepid second thought came to him. His nerves had been unstrung by the previous experiences of the day; even at that, so ran his thoughts, he would have been up and coming in the case of an onslaught by a savage bear, a bear who stuck to business according to approved bear methods.

But to have a bear come in from the night, and bow and scrape and dance and want to shake hands—it was distinctly irregular. Mr. Trask excused himself for his precipitate flight. It was a crazy bear! Mr. Trask had known for a long time that all the world outside of Misery Gore was crazy. He was determined to suppress lunacy in his own bailiwick, remorselessly, without mercy—and no bear could come it over him by any such airs! If this thing were not discouraged, bears would be coming around seeking to kiss him and maybe sing songs.

But when Mr. Trask peered in at the open door, he noted that the intruder was lying behind the stove directly under the rack where the shotgun and the rifle were hung. Such being the circumstances, and there being no telling what a lunatic bear would do if he were stirred up, Mr. Trask unhasped the door of a kennel, called out the tame bobcat and the domesticated minks and took to the woods again.

IN the first flicker of the gray dawn Miss Poole dared to walk away from the spot where she had been jumping up and down and threshing her arms in order to keep from freezing to death. Therefore, before long, the lady happened upon the homeless Mr. Trask, who was sitting on the log at the bottom of the gulch, snoring in unquiet slumber with his elbows propped on his knees.

Miss Poole knew that she was thoroughly wild; she had been telling herself so in the dark hours. But when she spied game, and began to hunt around to find the biggest rocks she could manage as weapons, her mood of implacable savagery was screwed up to concert pitch. She had definitely ceased to view Nicodemus as a pet. He was merely a resource in extremity. She desperately feared that she could not find her way out of that tangle of landscape. And in the condition in which she was, as to raiment, she rather fervently hoped she could not find her way out just then—at any rate, not until she had been able to touch up her toilet in some degree.

Mr. Koshland and bug-eyed observers were guarding the passes—that was the understanding. As she looked at it, to give up after one night and sneak out to

them and cry quits was to spoil a professional future of which she had become jealous and extremely proud in anticipation of fame to be won. Miss Poole had plenty of grit and strength. And she was raving mad with Mr. Koshland. She was convinced that he had lied to her in order to put her through the real stunt, in his fear lest the newspaper sleuths would be able to detect a fake.

All her tumultuous emotions were blended into grim determination to show 'em! She had never skinned a bear! But she needed something more substantial for clothing than the ribs of burdock leaves! She had never tried to eat raw bear! But she had no notion of spoiling a career by dying of hunger when there was a bear handy.

It was fortunate for Mr. Trask that he had brought along a vigilant friend in the person of the bobcat. Otherwise the desperate, prehistoric woman would have secured her quarry. The first rock missed him by a narrow margin. The bobcat squalled. Miss Poole had been able to register distance and elevation by her first shot, and Mr. Trask opened his eyes just in time to dodge the second missile, which was coming straight at his head.

HE leaped up, fell over the log and regained his balance on all fours and was more frightened by what he beheld than he had been by the rock that whizzed past his ear. In tattered newspapers which had been wrapped around his salt-pork purchases, he had read about "the new woman" and had been indifferently interested in the clamor over dress-reform. This amazing specimen of the twin contentions was coming at him with fresh rocks. One of the rocks glanced off his back as he turned to flee. He stumbled to his feet and let out all links of speed, with the minks and the bobcat as pace-makers. He knew by the rocks that crashed into the bushes and barked the trees along his line of retreat that the attacker was attentively and consistently with him.

Mr. Trask was fully conscious that he had had no success whatever in attempting to explain to a bear that he himself was not a bear. This assailant, whatever she or he or it might be, seemed to be in no state of mind to be willing to listen to any sort of explanations. Furthermore, so it seemed to the gasping fugitive, he had mislaid his voice. The morning light was wan and eerie. Mr. Trask, running, was not sure, as he pondered, just what he had seen. He did not dare to take the time to look back and make sure. The ground was rough and required all his attention. Therefore he put his dependence on speed and on his knowledge of an especial place of refuge. This was a dark cave by the side of Tougas Brook, where he stored his pelts in an atmosphere that kept them pliable.

The mouth of the cavern was hidden by bushes, and Mr. Trask dived through them like a circus rider through a hoop, putting his faith in two possibilities of salvation: perhaps the pursuer would not see where he went; probably, were it really a woman, she would not dare to follow him. If she did venture to follow—

She did!

MISS Poole had a professional future in films ahead of her, and a professional future as an animal trainer behind her; and ambition was putting the goad to her natural self-reliance. She was after food and raiment, both of them on the hoof within reaching distance, and she proposed to get what she was after. Beyond all question, if Mr. Trask had been made aware that this new woman doggedly purposed to kill him and wear his hide, he would have died of sheer terror then and there in his tracks; but Mr. Trask was too thoroughly conversant with the methods of wild game to allow himself to be caught at bay in a *cul de sac*. He had dodged into the cave because it offered still another, and a final resource: there was a sort of a chimney in the rocks leading up to the slope above. He climbed up nimbly and galloped on his way; the bobcat and the minks ducked out past Miss Poole in the darkness and escaped.

As soon as Mr. Trask was out of the chimney, the dim light of the morning entered by that passage.

Miss Poole beheld objects that instantly availed to take her mind off the chase and turn it to matters that were more suitable for feminine consideration.

Furs! Many furs!

She knelt and stroked them and fondled them and held them to her cheeks and murmured her delighted surprise. Then she heaped them in her arms and went forth from the cavern and examined her treasures in the light of the morning. She did not attempt to classify them. She did not bother her head about the natural history end of the discovery. Her joyous vision embraced possibilities of muffs and stoles and coats and toques! She could see where her professional film future was well furred up, at any rate. And in the extremity of dishabille in which she found herself on that bleak morning, and in that keen wind that followed the rain, she was not taking time to bother about the fine rights of property or to what extent findings were keepings. For that matter, she reflected that perhaps wild animals crawled into caves and shed their skins after the fashion of the snakes with which she was familiar.

Beside the brook there were bushes with long thorns. She patched up a garment of assorted furs that swathed her from neck to heels and dragged on the ground.

The two domesticated minks came down to the brook to fish for their breakfast, not minding the furred Miss Poole in the least, having been habituated by association with Mr. Trask to feel perfectly at home in the presence of a human being thus attired. When they clambered upon the bank, each lugging a good-sized trout, they were painfully disillusionized by being obliged to dodge rocks that this skin-clad person flung at them; they dropped the fish and scurried away.

IN the daylight Miss Poole was able to retrace her steps, or at least to find her way through a pass, and she arrived at a farmhouse where Mr. Koshland and his party had located themselves. She was obtrusively gnawing at a raw fish when she walked in on Mr. Koshland, and she flung the fish in his face and followed it with prolonged objurgation.



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It required a full half-hour of apology, protestation, entreaty and fulsome promises of more salary and a share in the royalties before the new wild spirit of the primitive woman indicated the least symptom of being tamed, before Miss Poole consented to drop her rôle.

"Well, answer me this! Do you admit I have done it?" she demanded.

"Yes!" bleated Mr. Koshland. "But how—"

"Do you admit I have done it all on my own hook?"

"Sure! But the thief that stole all my good property, he—"

"Forget it! I don't need to fake nothing in my professional career. I come out eating my breakfast, don't I?" She picked the fish from the floor and bit into it.

"Yes, you do! But how do you catch 'em?"

"That's my own business! And it's my own business how I got these skins after I played September Morn when the foliage dropped off! I aint sure yet that you aint a piker, Koshland, but we'll let it stand at that, on condition that a new contract is to be drawn. And I want a scenario for a Frozen North picture, seeing I've got the furs!"

Mr. Koshland had a temper of his own when his inquiring disposition had been snubbed. "Keep it to yourself how you

got 'em, if I aint fit to know about the things you do when you're working on the salary I give you. But I think they got so scared they jumped out of their skins when they saw you looking like you say you looked."

"We'll let it go at that, if you say so," retorted Miss Poole stiffly. "But we'll consider that's about enough from you on the subject, Koshland, and that goes for now, and from now on!"

And as the lady said, so it was. And that's all she ever did say!

SHE had come out from the south side of Misery Gore. Mr. Trask marched down over the mountain from the north side. He lugged a croker-sack on his back, and it was stuffed with articles that he never showed to anybody. He found a job as a hired man on a farm, and he always kept his mouth shut about a bear who danced and tried to shake hands and about a—well, Mr. Trask shook his head dubiously when his thoughts ran on that matter and on what he kept hidden in the croker-sack, and he allowed his general explanation to new and inquiring friends to cover the whole question: he said that he had come out to dwell among human beings because living too long alone in the woods, as a hermit trapper, was apt to "tiddledoo a man's brains, no matter how naturally solid the brains was."

THE DROP-IN

(Continued from page 66)

grew stronger, and he turned his face to the left, seeking to make out the form of some dead animal, but it was too black under the trees, and he could not distinguish objects more than a few feet away. There was a sudden tug at his leg below the knee, as if a vine had grown across the trail, and then—a sudden report jarred his eardrums, and a brilliant flame seemed to spurt straight for his eyes.

For a moment Ross' faculties seemed paralyzed, and he was absolutely blinded. Then he groped ahead. His eyes were gradually readjusted to the night after he had stumbled headlong against three different trees. He felt sick and faint at the realization of his narrow escape. One of Matt Caulkins' spring-guns!

Probably Caulkins had set it there for deer, with a cord stretched a foot above the trail; or perhaps it had been baited for bobcat or bear, which would account for the pungent smell. It must have been a shotgun, judging from the intensity of the flash, and Ross shuddered at the thought. It occurred to him that the thing had been trained in such a manner that it would strike a deer behind the shoulder, and this accounted for the fact that the charge had failed to riddle him. The buckshot had passed behind him. He felt the back of his coat to determine if the slack of the cloth had been pierced by the shot. The garment seemed intact, but he experienced a queer squirming sensation in the small of his back at the knowledge that the slugs could not have missed his spine by more than six inches.

Ross turned aside and dropped the rifle down a crevice in the rocks, having se-

lected the place long ago. Shortly thereafter he knocked softly at Auntie Hodges' door. She came forth to prepare his coffee and before retiring she observed that it was not yet ten o'clock. After she had retired, Ross reset the clock at eleven-thirty and sought his room. The thing had gone through as planned, without a hitch; yet more clearly than ever before, he saw the logic of the sheriff's theory of the unknown element. Twice that night the grisly apparition of the drop-in had loomed beside him and stretched forth its long claws—once when Caulkins' horse had winded him, again when the spring-gun had belched forth its leaden slugs to search for him in the night. There was sound logic in this drop-in stuff that the sheriff preached.

The next morning Ross worked in the field with a sense of expectancy. The girl would have gone at once to some neighbor's house, and some one would have started for the Forest Service cabin to telephone the news to Marsten. Early in the morning three different neighbors came in separately to carry the tidings to Ross and Auntie Hodges. The coroner drove past before nine o'clock, and an hour later the sheriff and a deputy passed up the road. Ross attempted to visualize Turner's arrival at the deserted Gregory place, none there to greet him save the coroner and the dead man sprawled where he had fallen.

BUT the reality of Turner's arrival was in no way similar to the one Ross pictured. The sheriff found a score of neighbors clustered round the place, each one